

APPROVED

**MIDDLESEX COUNTY
TRANSPORTATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE**

MINUTES

April 25, 2017

Attendance Officers

Chairman Paul Larrousse, National Transit Institute
Vice-Chair Tom Vigna, North Brunswick Township

Municipal Representatives

Mr. Dennis McFadden, Carteret Borough
Mayor Brad Cohen, East Brunswick Township
Mr. Joseph Criscuolo, East Brunswick Township
Mr. Keith Kipp, East Brunswick Township
Mr. Sanford Gardner, East Brunswick Township
Mr. Jonathan Stervesky, East Brunswick Township
Mr. Brian Tobin, Metuchen Borough/ 14th Legislative District
Mr. Steve Mamakas, Old Bridge Township
Mr. Lupe Munoz, Perth Amboy City
Mr. Les Varga, Plainsboro Township
Ms. Cynthia Urbanik, South River Borough
Mr. Thomas Cornell, Woodbridge Township

Others

Ms. Jael Davis, 6th Congressional District
Mr. Paul Onish, 14th Legislative District
Mr. Daniel Lebar, Esq., 18th Legislative Districts
Ms. Laila Caune, County Office of Aging & Disabled Services
Mr. Mike Kruimer, East Coast Greenway Alliance
Ms. Anne Kruimer, East Coast Greenway Alliance
Mr. Bill Neary, Keep Middlesex Moving Inc.
Mr. Tom Clark, New Jersey Transit
Mr. James Karamanos, Resident, Highland Park
Mr. Mike Beltranena, Suburban Transit/COACH USA
Mr. Niranjan Patel, New Jersey Department of Transportation (Presenter)
Mr. Mike Allen, New Jersey Department of Transportation – Operation Life Saver (Presenter)
Mr. Todd Hirt, New Jersey Department of Transportation – Operation Life Saver (Presenter)

Staff

Mr. George M. Ververides, Director, Middlesex County Office of Planning
Mr. Anthony Gambilonghi, Supervisor, Transportation Division
Mr. Bruce McCracken, Principal Planner, Transportation Division
Ms. Jeanette Tugya, Principal Planner, Development Review Division
Ms. Mirah Becker, Supervisor, Comprehensive Planning, Parks & the Environment
Mr. Joe Peake, Information Technology Department

Total in Attendance – 33

I. Call to Order

- **Statement on Open Public Meetings Act**
- **Pledge Allegiance**

II. Minutes

February 28, 2017 Minutes were distributed for approval at the next meeting.

Motion to approve January 24, 2017 Minutes were made by Mr. Onish. Second by Mr. Cornell.
Motion carried.

III. Welcome/ Chairman's Remarks

Chairman Larrousse called the meeting to order in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act. The Chairman welcomed all that attended the meeting and called for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Larrousse discussed anticipated funding cuts to infrastructure projects throughout the U.S. A Resolution of Support was suggested for transportation funding from our Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders to Congressional Delegates.

Sign in Reminder

Chairman Larrousse reminded the public to sign the attendance sheet.

Correspondence

Mr. Gambilonghi announced the New Jersey Department of Transportation (DOT) will hold a Public Information Center Session on Monday, May 16, 2017 from 4pm to 7pm at the South Brunswick Municipal Building, 540 Ridge Road, Monmouth Junction, NJ. The proposed project is a temporary pilot study for implementation of a Hard Running Shoulder (HRS) along a 1.85-mile section of Route 1 within the township. If successful, DOT will consider making it a permanent improvement.

Freeholder Comments – Not Present.

Introduction of TCC Members

All persons and members in attendance of the meeting introduced themselves and the organization(s) they represented.

IV. Special Item #1: Route 18 Intersection & Other Improvements, Edgeboro Road – Tices Lane, East Brunswick Township. Presented by: Niranjana Patel, New Jersey Department of Transportation.

Mr. Patel introduced himself and discussed road intersection improvements along corridor Route 18. The project is in East Brunswick Township, Middlesex County. Within the project limits is a divided six-lane urban principal arterial running south to north with a posted speed limit of 45mph. The northbound and southbound traffic along Route 18 is separated by a concrete barrier curb. Route 18 and Tices Lane form a four-legged intersection. The northbound approach of Route 18 consists of three through lanes and one auxiliary lane for the loop ramp in the northeast quadrant of the intersection. The southbound approach of Route 18 consists of three through lanes with a fourth lane opening immediately after the intersection to serve as a deceleration lane for the shopping center. Left turns are prohibited along the eastbound approach of Tices Lane.

Mr. Patel said Route 18 and Edgeboro Road will have a reverse jug handle from Route 18 southbound and form a four-legged signalized intersection. Edgeboro Road, Old Bridge Turnpike and a one-way ramp onto Route 18 northbound will form a four-legged signalized intersection approximately 75 feet east of Route 18. All turns are prohibited along Route 18 southbound with the turning movements provided via jughandles.

The NJDOT is proposing to prohibit left turns from Old Bridge Turnpike northbound and Edgeboro Road westbound onto Route 18 southbound. Left turns would only be permitted from Edgeboro Road westbound onto Old Bridge Turnpike southbound.

Traffic traveling to Route 18 southbound would be redirected to the Route 18 and Tices Lane intersection. To accommodate the relocated traffic volume at the Route 18 and Tices Lane and Old Bridge Turnpike intersections, the NJDOT is proposing the following:

- Modify the westbound approach of Tices Lane to Dual left turn lanes, a through lane, a through/right lane and two receiving lanes on Tices Lane.
- Modify the signal phasing to three phase consisting of Route 18 right of way, Tices Lane westbound protected left, and Tices Lane right of way.
- Modify the southbound approach of Old Bridge Turnpike at Tices Lane to consist of a through lane and an exclusive right turn lane and modify the signal timing.
- Remove the U-Turn sign along Route 18 northbound between Tices Lane and Edgeboro Road and redirect this movement to the existing U-Turn at South Woodland Avenue.

Mr. Patel concluded that before the construction design is finalized, a Public Outreach Session will be held.

Questions/Answers:

Mr. Mike Beltranena, Suburban Transit/COACH USA, questioned during the construction phase if buses will be prohibited from accessing the East Brunswick Transportation Center onto Route 18 northbound, and from southbound turning onto the Old Bridge Turnpike loop. Mr. Patel said buses will not be prohibited to access these locations during construction. A description of how was addressed.

Chairman Larrousse asked whether an environmental impact statement is involved because of new residential development between Tices Lane and Old Bridge Turnpike. Mr. Patel replied yes.

Ms. Cynthia Urbanik, South River Borough, asked if there would be other significant changes to traffic movement other than at Edgeboro Road. Mr. Patel said the only other changes include sidewalk and drainage improvements.

There was concern expressed by Mayor Brad Cohen of East Brunswick and other Township officials present at the meeting that the elimination of the existing left turn from Edgeboro Road to Route 18 South would have adverse impacts on existing traffic and new traffic to be generated in the affected area from new nearby developments in the redevelopment zone. This also included the effect on school buses coming from Edgeboro Road that currently use left-turn movement to Route 18 South.

Mayor Brad Cohen, Township Administrator Joseph Criscuolo and other township officials expressed strong opposition on the proposed elimination of the left turn from Edgeboro Road to Route 18 South stating it would worsen the existing traffic flows on area roads including Old Bridge Turnpike and the intersection at Route 18 and Tices Lane. A meeting with NJDOT on the proposed project was requested. Mr. Patel agreed to schedule a meeting between NJDOT and East Brunswick officials to further discuss the project.

Special Item #2: Operation Lifesaver Program Presented by: Todd Hirt, Operation Lifesaver Program Coordinator.

Mr. Hirt along with Mr. Mike Allen introduced themselves from the NJDOT Operation Lifesaver program. This is a national organization which has a network of trained volunteers and who offer free rail safety education programs in all fifty states. The program goal is to end collisions, deaths and injuries at highway rail grade crossings and on rail property. Specialized materials are tailored for the needs of different audiences both for in person safety presentations and for groups or tabling events. Handouts were given.

Recent New Jersey statistics:

- 1, 565 public crossings: 43 crossings incidents, 1 fatal, 78 injured.
- Pedestrian incidents: 19 fatal, 12 injured.

Mr. Hirt utilized a Power Point presentation to discuss, safety tips for highway rail grade crossings including stopping distances, signage and slogans and emergency notifications. He concluded that videos and additional materials on safety can be found on the Operation Lifesaver national website <https://oli.org/> and social media.

Question was asked about rail road crossing exemption for non-used tracks located on Route 27 southbound of the New Brunswick High School. Mr. Hirt stated the tracks could be exempted or removed from property depending on whether the tracks are privately owned.

Suggestion was made to post warning signs along elevated front crossing tracks where vehicles must go up to-cross-to the other side of the track. There are front crossings tracks located in Helmetta Borough. Mr. Hirt stated once locations are identified consultants would be hired to design these detour signs to address the concern.

Mr. Anthony Gambilonghi asked the amount of time given before flashing lights and the opening of the crossing gate. Mr. Hirt stated the federal requirement for flashing lights and activation of gate is 20 seconds. This is a Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) standard, although an increase of time to 30 seconds has been sought by State officials.

Staff Reports

A. New Jersey Department of Transportation – Raymond Tomczak
Not Present.

B. New Jersey Transit –Thomas Clark
No Report.

C. North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) –Keith Hamas

Not Present.

D. New Jersey Turnpike Authority – Kevin Dunn

Not Present.

E. Rutgers – The State University – Jennifer Stuart, Leigh Ann Kimber

Not Present.

F. Keep Middlesex Moving (KMM) –William Neary, Morteza Ansari

Mr. Neary stated Rutgers University Transit Studio students gave a presentation on Travel Needs and Transit Marketing within Middlesex and Somerset Counties. During the months of May and June a Street Smart campaign will be held in Dunellen Borough and Middlesex Borough along Route 28. Two upcoming distracted driving events will be held at the South Amboy High School and at Highland Park High School.

Mr. Neary noted he was present at the grand opening of the new Amazon warehouse located in Carteret Borough.

G. Middlesex County Area Transit Services – Laila Caune, Phil Sheridan

Ms. Caune reported that as of April 1, 2017 MCAT will no longer be providing Saturday shuttle service due to funding cutbacks. Also, as of April 1, 2017 the M-6 MCAT shuttle hours and route have been modified due to funding cutbacks.

H. Middlesex County Engineering Office – Richard Wallner

Not Present.

I. East Coast Greenway Alliance (ECGA) – Mike and Ann Kruimer

Mr. Kruimer announced upcoming cycling related events:

4/29/2017	Bike Tour de Franklin to support the Franklin Food Bank.
5/6/2017	CJBC Farmlands Tour 5/6/2017.
5/20/2017	Freewalkers “Big Walk” from Metro Park to NYC – 50 miles.
5/21/2017	22 nd Annual Bicycle Tour of Edison and Metuchen.

J. Middlesex County Office of Emergency Management – John Ferguson

Not Present.

K. Academy Bus Co – Chuck Kassinger

Not Present.

L. Suburban Transit / Coach USA – Michael Beltranena

Mr. Beltranena reported that Coach USA received 24 new commuter buses in January 2017. Most recently the remaining 18 buses have been replaced with new buses.

M. Business Development and Education – Kathaleen Shaw, Carla Cefalo

Not Present.

N. Transportation News Update – Bruce McCracken.

Transportation events articles were provided as part of the meeting packet.

O. Staff Activities – George Ververides
No Report.

V.

Public Comments – Mr. Lebar inquired about curb reconstruction along a particular section of Route 27 in Metuchen Borough. Chairman Larrousse replied that NJDOT would need to be contacted or a discussion with the municipal governing body to initiate the process.

Mr. Kruimer expressed concern on the lack of bike racks on MCAT buses and whether they can be installed as they are on the NJ Transit 800 route local buses. Planning Staff said they would investigate the matter.

VI.

Adjournment – Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Beltranena. Motion seconded by Mr. Kruimer. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,



Danielle A. Britton, Secretary
Middlesex County Transportation Coordinating Committee